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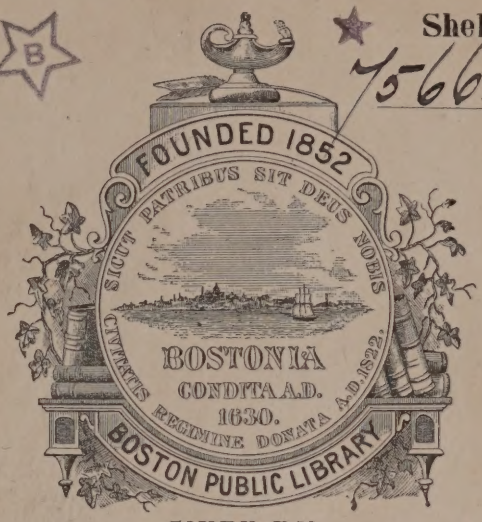

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April 15, 1858.

B

VINDICATION

OF

GENERAL WASHINGTON

FROM THE STIGMA OF ADHERENCE TO

SECRET SOCIETIES,

BY

JOSEPH RITNER,

GOVERNOR OF THE COMMONWEALTH OF PENNSYLVANIA,

COMMUNICATED

BY

REQUEST OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, TO THAT BODY,
ON THE 8TH OF MARCH, 1837,

WITH

THE PROCEEDINGS WHICH TOOK PLACE
ON ITS RECEPTION.

TOGETHER WITH

A LETTER TO DANIEL WEBSTER,

AND HIS

REPLY.

Boston:
PRINTED BY EZRA LINCOLN.

1841.

Fr. Pph. vol. 289
14504
Edward Gassett
Apr. 15. 1858

INTRODUCTION.

The annexed pamphlet by Ex-Governor Ritner of Pennsylvania is, strange as the fact may appear, a vindication of the character of *the father of his country* against the charge of Freemasonry! That Washington was an initiate we do not doubt, as many other respectable individuals have been, among whom may be numbered a Marshall, a Rush, a Wirt and others; for it has been the policy of the detestable, murderous society to seduce into their ranks the most respectable members of society and then to bind them to the most shocking, anti-christian oaths and under the still more shocking penalties of death, in various horrid forms, to keep the secrets of the institution, which chiefly consists, like a band of pirates and robbers, of the signs by which they may be known to each other! It is hardly necessary to add that of 100 initiates 99 though bound by their oaths to silence, have little more to do with the institution, although claimed as a member and "brother." Such were "brother Washington," "brother Judge Marshall" and a great number of others, who have been hypocritically brought within the pale of Freemasonry." But Washington did not die without leaving to his country his warning voice against "*all obstructions to the execution of the laws*, all combinations and associations under whatever plausible character. He might, we repeat, have been an initiate, but no freemason, as the reader of the annexed pamphlet will see. That Freemasonry "obstructed the execution of the Laws" in the trial of Masonic culprits in the western counties of New York state by false oaths and every other possible way, there is the most unequivocal evidence. In a word, says the late Myron Holley, speaking of Freemasonry, "more detestable principles cannot be imagined; they excite to crime and were intended for *shelter and protection* of practical iniquity!" This was literally a truth, they truly afforded *shelter and protection* to the murderers of William Morgan! But if as the memorable wretches tell you, that Freemasonry is a virtuous society it is asked why females or ladies are ex-

cluded,—why insulted? Who can read the following oath of a Master Mason, having a mother, wife, or sisters without the height of indignation. "Furthermore" (that is in addition to fifteen other oaths) "do I promise and swear, that I will not be at the initiating, passing or raising of an old man in dotage, a young man in non-age, an atheist, irreligious libertine, madman, hermaphrodite, *woman* or a fool." And again, "furthermore do I promise and swear that I will not violate the chastity of a Master Mason's wife, mother, sister or daughter, nor suffer it to be done by others, if in my power to prevent it, *I knowing them to be such,*" thus giving a Master Mason free access to every other woman in society.—Such is freemasonry and but a small part of that diabolical institution. Washington saw not only the folly but the wickedness of such oaths and the consequence that might follow from an institution of such a character.—And now (1841) would it be believed an effort is making by despicable or thoughtless individuals to revive it! Let us then, one and all, frown on the base attempt; let the warning voice of the father of his country be listened to and obeyed; let not a vestige remain of the accursed institution. In a more especial manner, let that degrading and disgraceful *silver plate,* which now lies under the corner stone of the Bunker Hill Monument,* be removed and the place supplied by some *Patriotic Inscription.*

* It is one of the Masonic deceptions in permitting the public to believe that the corner stone was laid by La Fayette, whereas he was only a spectator. It is engraven on the plate thus "On the 17th day of June, 1825, at the request of the Bunker Hill Monument Association the Most Worshipful John Abbott, Grand Master of Masons in Massachusetts, did in presence of General La Fayette lay this corner stone of a monument," &c. A falsehood like this is engraved on the plate deposited under the corner stone of the Masonic Temple in Boston. It is declared thereon that the Governor of the Commonwealth and the Mayor of the city were present at the laying of it. This being doubted an Antimason addressed a line to each of them, inquiring as to the truth of the statement. Levi Lincoln, the Governor and Harrison Gray Otis, the Mayor, both answered that they were not present nor invited to be present. The former said also that he knew nothing about the ceremony, until he saw the account of it in a newspaper at Worcester, the place of his residence.

VINDICATION

OF

GENERAL WASHINGTON.

Extract from the Journal of the House of Representatives—vol. 1, *page* 276.

JANUARY 20, 1837.—"The Speaker laid before the House a memorial from sundry citizens of Union county, complaining of certain inferences in relation to the masonic and other secret societies, drawn by the Governor in his annual message to the Legislature, from the writings of Washington, and praying for the appointment of a committee to wait upon the Governor, for the purpose of ascertaining and reporting how far General Washington's Farewell Address, and other writings, sustained the said inferences."

Which was read, as follows:

To the Honorable the Senate and House of Representatives in General Assembly met, we, the undersigned, citizens of Pennsylvania, beg leave most respectfully to represent:—

That the Governor of Pennsylvania, in his annual message to both branches of the Legislature, hath been wont to say on the subject of Freemasonry, it was a spirit of lawless combination, unknown to our open and equal institutions and opposed to the genius of republicanism, *against which the Father of his country sent forth his last and most solemn warning*. The Governor here has reference to General Washington's Farewell Address, when he is made to say, "*Beware of Secret Societies.*" The foregoing inference is slandering the ashes of the patriotic and forever beloved dead—it is defamatory to the lips of that chaste and holy man, whose whole life, with a single eye, was devoted to his country's good. Well may we say, he was a compound of righteousness, fitted by God as the special organ of liberty,

and patron of virtue, and his name now fills the whole space in the hearts of American gratitude, and bound are we by every tie of honor to preserve unsullied the name of that apostle of Liberty. His Farewell Address to the American people, contains not a single word from which even an inference of the kind can be drawn, nor, can from any of his political writings. In his letter to W. Jay, he speaks against the democratic societies then forming in our country, in behalf of the Revolutionists of France, in which Washington refused to take a part, until they had established their independence. He expressly says, " democratic societies then forming, which have for their object the control of government." Who will now presume to say that Freemasonry then was known by the name of democratic societies, and they were the object of Washington's last and solemn warning It is well remembered by thousands yet alive, in Pennsylvania, that Liberty Poles were raised in almost every village in our state, with the motto of Liberty floating high in the air, under which was inscribed, " France aided us with money and her bravest men —we will stand by her—Jay's treaty with England shall not be ratified—Washington is in error—down with the excise and stamp acts." These are the societies to which Washington had reference, and of which he expressed his fears.

Whereas, General Washington's acts, to this day, are regarded as authority, both in religion and politics, and aught calculated to detract from the just merits of this great and good man, should not be permitted to remain in doubt, by friends to our republic; more especially so, as his opinions have always had a moral influence over our elections, consequently, should alone be founded in what he actually said, word for word. As the Governor has again brought this question before the Legislature, and its importance can be by none doubted, we pray the Legislature to appoint a committee to wait on His Excellency the Governor of Pennsylvania, and solicit from him the source of information from which he derived his authority, as quoted in his late message to this House, as to the Father of our Country's last and solemn warning against that " spirit of lawless combination unknown in our open and equal institutions, and opposed to the genius of republicanism," and report the same, with such references to General Washington's Farewell Address, and other writings, as may place his words or allusions to Freemasonry

beyond the reach of doubt or cavil; and your petitioners will, as in duty bound, pray.

C. M. STRAUB,
JOHN SNYDER,
H. C. EYER.

When a motion was made by Mr. FORD, that the said memorial be referred to a select committee. Which was agreed to.

Whereupon, Messrs. Ford, Dimmick of Pike, Stark, Garretson and English, were appointed the committee.

A motion was then made by Mr. SPACKMAN, that the said committee be discharged from the further consideration of the subject.

The motion being under consideration, a motion was made by Mr. REED, of Philadelphia, to postpone the further consideration of the same for the present. Which was agreed to.

MONDAY, MARCH 13, 1837.—Mr. FORD, from the committee to whom was referred a memorial from citizens of Union county, complaining of certain inferences in relation to the masonic and other secret societies, drawn by the Governor in his annual message, from the writings of Washington, made a report, No. 219, which was laid on the table.

Mr. CURTIS called for the reading of the said report; when a motion was made by Mr. HOPKINS, that the reading of the report be postponed until this afternoon. Which was agreed to.

SAME DAY.—Agreeably to order, the report in relation to inferences drawn by the Governor, in his late message, from the writings of General Washington, was read.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE.

The committee appointed on the part of the House of Representatives, in conformity with the prayer of sundry citizens of Pennsylvania, complaining of certain inferences in relation to the Masonic and other secret societies, drawn by the Governor in his annual message to the Legislature, from the

writings of Washington, and praying for the appointment of a committee to wait upon His Excellency, for the purpose of ascertaining and reporting how far General Washington's Farewell Address, and other writings, sustain the same references

REPORT:

That on the day succeeding their appointment, they addressed a letter to His Excellency the Governor, a copy of which is herewith subjoined, marked A, to which the answer, marked B, which is also subjoined, was shortly after returned. In conformity with the intimation therein contained, "that he would embrace the earliest occasion of leisure from other duties, to place the subject before them in the light which its importance seemed to him to demand," the Governor, a few days since, transmitted to your committee the evidences of his authority in using the language complained of in his late message, in the communication marked C, hereunto annexed, which, together with this report, is respectfully submitted to the consideration of the House, without further comment.

A.

REPRESENTATIVE CHAMBER,
Harrisburg, January 21, 1837.

DEAR SIR:

Yesterday morning the Speaker presented a memorial to the House of Representatives, signed by a few citizens of Pennsylvania, praying for the appointment of a committee on the part of that body, "to wait on His Excellency the Governor of Pennsylvania, and solicit from him the source of information from which he derived his authority, as quoted in his late message to the House, as to the Father of his Country's last and solemn warning against 'that spirit of lawless combination unknown to our open and equal institutions, and opposed to the genius of republicanism,' and report the same, with such references to General Washington's Farewell Address, and other writings, as may place his words or allusions to Freemasonry beyond the reach of doubt or cavil."

In compliance with the prayer of the petitioners, the undersigned were appointed a committee for the purpose expressed in the said memorial, and in the performance of the duty thus assigned them, they herewith submit to your Excellency the above extract from the same, as presented to the House. In

it you will find embodied all that for which the memorialists most earnestly pray, and which we most respectfully submit to your Excellency's consideration, for such action as you may think proper to take upon the subject.

With the highest respect, we are, Sir,
Your most ob't servants,

GEORGE FORD, Jr.
WILLIAM ENGLISH,
WILLIAM GARRETSON,
HENRY STARK,
O. S. DIMMICK.

His Excellency JOSEPH RITNER,
Governor of Pennsylvania.

B.

EXECUTIVE CHAMBER,
Harrisburg, January 23, 1837.

GENTLEMEN:

I this day received your letter of the 21st instant, informing me that you have been appointed a committee on behalf of the House of Representatives, to obtain from me the authority on which, in my annual message to the Legislature, I asserted that General Washington had sent forth his last and most solemn warning against "that spirit of lawless combination unknown to our open and equal institutions, and opposed to the genius of republicanism," which has acquired such influence in our days.

It will afford me much pleasure to comply with the request of the House of Representatives, thus made, through their committee. I shall embrace the earliest occasion of leisure from other duties to place the subject before them in the light which its importance seems to me to demand.

I am, Gentlemen,
Very respectfully,
Your fellow-citizen,
JOS. RITNER.

Messrs. GEORGE FORD, JR.
WILLIAM ENGLISH,
WILLIAM GARRETSON,
HENRY STARK,
O. S. DIMMICK.

C.

EXECUTIVE CHAMBER,
Harrisburg, March 8, 1837.

GENTLEMEN:

The annual Message to the Legislature, of December 6th, 1836, declares:—

That the chief evil of the times is "that spirit of lawless combination unknown to our open and equal institutions, and opposed to the genius of republicanism, against which the Father of his Country sent forth his last and most solemn warning."

That "what was comparatively restricted and harmless in his day, has since assumed the dangerous character of regularly organized, oath bound, secret working, wide spread and powerful societies."

And that "of these, some bearing more and some less of the features just enumerated, the Society of Freemasonry is the fruitful mother."

These opinions and statements of the message, have occasioned your appointment as a Committee by the House of Representatives, "to wait on the Governor of Pennsylvania, to solicit from him the source of information from which he derived his authority as quoted in his last message to the House, as to the Father of our Country's last and solemn warning against 'that spirit of lawless combination, unknown to our open and equal institutions, and opposed to the genius of republicanism,'—and report the same with such references to General Washington's Farewell Address and other writings, as may place his words or allusions to Freemasonry beyond the reach of doubt or cavil."

No occurrence of my life ever afforded me greater pleasure than that of being called upon officially, to vindicate the memory of Washington from the stigma of adherence to secret combinations.

His name is so deservedly dear, and his example so powerful among the people of this nation, that the wide trumpeted misfortune of his unthinking youth, in becoming a Freemason, has tended more to fasten upon us the evils of that society than all the jealous spirit of equality—the aroused power of the press—or the cry from the ground of spilled blood, has hitherto been sufficient to overcome. Even the practical renunciation of the last thirty-one years of his life, and his latest and most solemn precepts on the subject of lawless combinations, have failed to atone for his early indiscretion, or to remove the danger; and with Franklin, Lafayette and many others, he, the chosen one of freedom—the foe of kings and the leader of the armies of Independence, is claimed to have passed down to the grave, the obedient servant of a skulking monarchy, and the sworn thrall of principles at war with the open practices of his whole glorious life.

If it be true as the lamented Colden, (himself one of the initiated,) declared, that *many a mason became a great man, but no great man ever became a mason,* how nearly does it concern the youth of our country, from among whom their own merits must elect her future great men, to pause and reflect before they commit their present standing and future reputation, to the keeping of a society, which, for its own cold hearted and selfish purposes could immolate even the fame of Washington at the shrine of its abominations. From the same flowers that bestow honey on the bee, and shed fragrance on the air, it is said the wasp extracts poison. Thus the name of Washington, which has become the watchword of liberty and of national independence over the world, is degraded into the office of a masonic gull-trap at home.

Each votary of the order, when pressed by the weight of reason, so easily brought to bear against him by the weakest advocate of democratic equality, answers every objection, by repeating the name of "GRAND MASTER WASHINGTON."

Newspaper editors seem to have in stereotype, as a standing answer to all arguments, and a spell to charm down all charges against the craft, the names of *Washington, Franklin* and *Lafayette.*

Masonic orators, from the declaimer of a bar room meeting, to the masonic occupant of the sacred desk, and the legislative seat, alike conclude their discourses with the names of *Washington,* and the other heroes and sages of the Revolution.

Not only do masons thus in general terms, claim the authority of his name, but they even designate with particularity, the masonic offices he held—the lodges over which he presided, and the continuance and degree of his devotion to the order; nay, some of them go so far as to shew the very "attire which he often wore as a mason," and the *mallet* which he used as Master.

The Hon. Timothy Bigelow of Massachusetts, in an oration delivered at the funeral obsequies solemnized in honor of General Washington's memory, by the Grand Lodge of that State, on the 11th of February, 1800, made use of the following language:—"He (Washington) cultivated our art with *sedulous attention,* and never lost an opportunity of advancing the interests or promoting the honor of the craft."—"The information received from our brethren who had the happiness of being members of *the lodge over which he presided many years,* and of which *he died the Master,* furnish abundant proof of his *persevering zeal* for the prosperity of the institution. Constant and punctual in his attendance, scrupulous in his observance of the regulations of the Lodge, and solicitous at all times to communicate light and instruction, he discharged the duties of the chair with uncommon dignity and intelligence in all the mysteries of our art. We see before us the *very attire which he often wore as a mason.*"

The American edition of Preston's Masonry, asserts that "the society of Freemasons, in America, continued to flourish

under the auspices of General Washington, who continued his patronage to the Lodges *until his death.*"

Masonry has published a letter from him to King David's Lodge of Newport, R. I. without date, but said to be written in August, 1790, in which he is made to say, "I shall always be happy to advance the interests of the society, and to be considered by them as a deserving brother."

Four other letters, purporting to be from him, have also been published by masons, all without dates; one to the Grand Lodge of Charlestown, two to the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, and one to the Grand Lodge of Pennsylvania, all lauding the institution.

Andrew Jackson, late President of the United States, when invited in March, 1830, by a body of masons, to join in a masonic pilgrimage to the tomb of the Father of his Country, thus replied: "The memory of that *illustrious Grand Master*, [Washington,] cannot receive a more appropriate honor than that which religion and masonry pay it, when they send their votaries to his tomb, fresh from the performance of acts which THEY consecrate."

General Tallmadge, of New York, asserted in a letter published in the winter of 1831–2, "that Washington had often presided in Poughkeepsie Lodge."

Having thus stated both the general and particular claims of masonry upon the name and fame of Washington, I shall proceed to disprove them.

As to Washington's early masonry, the following incident will be sufficient:

In 1830, the Rev. Ezra Styles Ely, D. D. editor of a religious newspaper, called the Philadelphian, was charged in some of the prints of the day, with being a mason. In an editorial article on the subject, contained in the number of that paper dated July 23, 1830, he relates the following important anecdote:

"In reply to all this, I would assert, that I never was a mason, and never expect to be. Hitherto I have neither advocated nor opposed masonry, unless it be in the relation of a conversation which passed between General Washington and Governor Jonathan Trumbull, the second, which the latter more than once repeated to my father. The latter, when aid-de-camp to the former, asked him if he would advise him to become a mason."—General Washington replied, "that masonry was a benevolent institution, which might be employed for the *best or worst* of purposes; but that for the most part it was merely *child's play*, and he could *not give him any advice on the subject.*"

On the question of his having been the Master or Grand Master of a Lodge, the following proofs will not be disputed. The first document is an extract from the records of King David's Lodge, in Newport, R. I. the authenticity of which has been thus established:

An action of trover was brought by the officers of St. John's Lodge, the successor of King David's Lodge, to recover those records from Dr. Benjamin Case, who claimed to be Master of the Lodge, in the progress of which they were proved to be the original records, and Dr. Case was ordered to restore them to St. John's Lodge, or pay $300 damages. The money was paid, and the records retained for the good of the country. This is the extract:

"Regular Lodge night, held at the house of Mr. James Tew, Wednesday evening, the 7th February, 1781—5781."

"A motion was made, that as our worthy brother, His Excellency General Washington, was daily expected amongst us, a committee should be appointed to prepare an address, on behalf of the Lodge, to present to him. Voted that the Right Worshipful Master, together with brother Seixas, Peleg Clark, John Handy, and Robert Eliott, be a committee for that purpose, and that they present the same to this Lodge, at their next meeting, for their approbation."

"At a Lodge, held by request of the Right Worshipful Master, February 14th, 1781—5781."

"The committee appointed to draft an address to our worthy Brother, His Excellency General Washington, report, *that on enquiry they find General Washington not to be Grand Master of North America, as was supposed, nor even Master of any particular Lodge.* They are therefore of opinion, that this Lodge would not choose to address him as a private brother,—*at the same time, think it would not be agreeable to our worthy brother to be addressed as SUCH.*"

"Voted that the report of the committee be received, and that the address be entirely laid aside for the present."

The other document is a reply by Washington, to a letter he had received from the Rev. G. W. Snyder, of Fredericktown, Maryland, on the danger to be apprehended from the spread of Illuminism and Jacobinism in this country. The letter, in which was the following passage, "upon serious reflection, I was led to think that it might be within your power to prevent the horrid plan from corrupting the brethren of the English Lodges *over which you preside,*" was accompanied with a copy of "Robinson's proofs of a Conspiracy" for the General's use.

"Mount Vernon, 25th September, 1798.

"The Rev. Mr. Snyder,

"*Sir,*—Many apologies are due to you for my not acknowledging the receipt of your obliging favor of the 22d ult. and for not thanking you, at an earlier period, for the book you had the goodness to send me.

"I have heard much of the nefarious and dangerous plan and doctrines of the Illuminati, but never saw the book until you were pleased to send it to me. The same causes which have prevented my acknowledging the receipt of your letter, have prevented my reading the book hitherto; namely, the multiplicity of matters which pressed upon me before, and the debilitated state in which I was left, after a severe fever had been removed, and which allows me to add little more now than thanks for your kind wishes and favorable sentiments,

except *to correct an error you have run into, of my presiding over the English Lodges in this country. The fact is I preside over none, nor have I been in one more than once or twice within the last thirty years.* I believe, notwithstanding, that none of the Lodges in this country are contaminated with the principles ascribed to the society of the Illuminati.

"With respect, I am, Sir,

"Your ob't humble servant,

"GEO. WASHINGTON."

On the 17th of October, in the same year, Mr. Snyder wrote a second letter to Washington, and received a reply, dated October 24th, pretty much in the same terms.

The authenticity of the correspondence is thus proved:

"BOSTON, November 22, 1832.

"I hereby certify, that I have compared a letter from the Rev. G. W. Snyder to General Washington, dated August 22d, 1798, and two letters from General Washington to Mr. Snyder, dated September 25th, and October 24th, of the same year, as printed in the "Proceedings of the third Antimasonic State Convention," with the recorded copies in General Washington's Letter Books, obtained by me at Mount Vernon, and I find them printed exactly as there recorded, except Mr. Snyder's letter, in which the word "secret" is omitted in one place, and the words "on this terrene spot" in another. General Washington's letters to Mr. Snyder are exactly printed throughout.

"JARED SPARKS."

With respect to the letter said to have been written by him to King David's Lodge in 1798, and to the four others, the Grand Lodges of Charlestown, Massachusetts, and Pennsylvania, and which are relied on to establish his devotion to masonry till his death, it may be remarked:

1st. That three of them, viz: that to King David's Lodge, and the two to the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, are *without date;* a circumstance wholly unprecedented in the whole correspondence of the writer, who above all other men, was noted for attention to method and form in his writings.

2d. That though General Washington caused to be carefully copied in books kept for that purpose, all his letters on every subject, no trace whatever of any of the five letters under consideration, nor any letters to any other Lodge or Masonic body whatever, are to be found among the records of his correspondence.

3d. That the originals of none of them have been seen out of the Lodge in open day, though the officers of at least the Grand Lodge of Massachusetts, have been publicly called on to produce and submit them to the examination of Jared Sparks, Esq. who, from his connexion with the Washington correspondence, is supposed to be best qualified to ascertain their authenticity.

The following letter from Mr. Sparks to the chairman of the committee of citizens of Massachusetts, who had called on the Grand Lodge to submit the letters to his inspection, is decisive on the two last of these points.

"Boston, February 18, 1833.

"*Sir*,—I received this morning your letter of the 15th instant, in which you inquire:

"*Whether I have yet seen or had in my possession any original letter or letters, in the hand writing of General Washington, addressed to any body of men denominating themselves Freemasons.*

"In reply, I can only state that I have *seen no letters from General Washington of the kind described* in yours, nor received any communication on the subject, either verbal or written.

"I am, Sir,
"Very respectfully,
"Your ob't servant,
"JARED SPARKS."

If corroboration were required, it is furnished by the following letter from Chief Justice Marshall, in reply to one from citizens of Massachusetts, inquiring of him, whether as biographer of Washington, he knew of the existence of any

authentic originals or copies of letters addressed by Washington to masonic bodies. The same persons also inquired whether the Chief Justice had declared the institution of masonry to be "a jewel of the utmost value," &c. &c.

"RICHMOND, October 18, 1833.

"*Sir*,—Your letter of the 11th, transmitting a resolution of the Antimasonic Convention of the State of Massachusetts, passed the 13th of last September, has just reached me. The flattering terms in which that resolution is expressed, claim and receive my grateful acknowledgments.

"The circumstances represented as attending the case of Morgan were heard with universal detestation, but produced no other excitement in this part of the United States, than is created by crimes of uncommon atrocity. Their operation on masonry, whatever it might be, was silent, rather arresting its progress and directing attention from the society, than inducing any open, direct attack upon it. The agitations which convulse the North, did not pass the Potomac. Consequently, an individual so much withdrawn from the world as myself, entering so little into the party conflicts of the day, could feel no motive, certainly I felt no inclination, to volunteer in a distant conflict, in which the wounds that might be received, would not be soothed by the consoling reflection that he suffered in the performance of a necessary duty. I never did utter the words ascribed to me, nor any other words importing the seutiment they convey. I never did say "*Freemasonry is a jewel of the utmost value, that the pure in heart and life can only appreciate it fully, and that in a free government it must, it will be sustained and protected.*" The fact mentioned in the resolution, that I have been in a Lodge *but once*, so far as I can recollect, *for nearly forty years*, is evidence that I have no disposition to volunteer in this controversy, as the zealous partizan, which this language would indicate. In fact I have sought to abstain from it. Although I attach no importance to the opinions I may entertain respecting masonry, yet I ought not to refuse on application, to disavow any expressions which may be ascribed to me, that I never used. I have said that I always understood the oaths taken by a mason, as being subordinate to his obligations as a citizen to the laws, but have never affirmed that there was any positive good or ill in the institution itself.

The resolution also inquires "whether, as the friend and biographer of Washington, I have in my possession or recollection, any knowledge of any acts of General Washington, or any documents written by him to masonic bodies, approving of masonry."

"The papers of General Washington were returned many years past, to my lamented friend his nephew, and are now, I believe, in the possession of Mr. Sparks. *I do not recollect ever to have heard him utter a syllable on the subject.* Such a document, however, not being of a character to make any impression at the time, may have passed my memory.

"With great respect,

"I am, Sir,

"Your ob't servant,

"J. MARSHALL."

To JOHN BAILEY, Esq.

These are the proofs of Washington's views in relation to masonry, which can be judicially established, if the House of Representatives raise a committee authorized and disposed to make the investigation; if the committee be vested with power to send for persons and papers; and if they be sustained by the House in the exercise of the legitimate authorities requisite to a legislative investigation. The conclusion to which these proofs lead are:

1. That in 1768, General Washington had ceased regular attendance at the Lodge. This is proved by his letter to Mr. Snyder.

2. That so far back as about the year 1780, he had become convinced, at least of the inutility of Freemasonry, and called it "child's play." This is established by his reply to Governor Trumbull.

3. That on the 25th of September, 1798, (one year and four months before his death,) his opinions on the subject of Freemasonry remained unchanged from what they were thirty years before when he was only thirty-six years old. This is established by his letter to Mr. Snyder.

4. That up to February, 1781, as appears by the records

of King David's Lodge, and up to the 25th September, 1798, as appears by his letter to Mr. Snyder, be had not been "Grand Master of North America, nor even Master of any particular Lodge."

5. That in 1781, as appears by the same record of King David's Lodge, it was not agreeable to him to be addressed *even as a private mason.*

6. That all the letters said to be written by Washington to Lodges are spurious. This is rendered nearly certain: *First*, by the non-production of the originals: *Second*, by the absence of copies among the records of his letters: *Third*, by their want of dates: *Fourth*, by the fact that his intimate friend and biographer, Chief Justice Marshall, (himself a mason in his youth,) says in his letter just given, that *he never heard Washington utter a syllable on the subject*—a matter nearly impossible, if Washington had for years been engaged in writing laudatory letters to the Grand Lodges of South Carolina, Pennsylvania, and Massachusetts.

But placing all these proofs out of view, and trying the claims of masonry upon him, merely by his general conduct and character, can it be imagined that the *republican* Washington, while engaged in the perilous contest of seven years, to establish in America a republican government, and secure the equal rights of the people against the nobility and monarchy of Great Britain, could favor a body of sworn devotees of aristocracy, whose leaders assumed to themselves and promulged their right to the titles of "Excellent Grand King —Most Excellent General Grand High Priest— Knight of Redemption—Knight of Christ—Knight of the Mother of Christ—Knight of the Holy Ghost— KING OF HEAVEN—*Most powerful Sovereign Grand Commander and Sovereign Grand Imperator General* of the thirty-third degree!" and the like profane, pompous and ridiculous titles, at the mention of which the imperial titles assumed by Napoleon and Iturbide, sink into insignificance?

Can it be imagined that the *virtuous* Washington, could cherish a society whose members, in some of its degrees, take oaths to keep each others secrets, "*murder and treason not excepted;*" and bind themselves by horrid imprecations, to extricate each other from difficulties, "whether they be *right or wrong?*"

Can it be imagined that the *patriotic* Washington, could countenance a combination, whose book of constitutions lays down the maxim, that although a brother, (one of the band,) be a *rebel* against the State, yet "if convicted of *no other crime*, this *cannot expel* him from the Lodge, and his relation to it remains *indefeasible?*"

Can it be imagined that the *religious* Washington, could foster an order of men who, at their midnight initiation of members of the *arch* Royal Degree, personate the great Jehovah in the awful scene of the Burning Bush; and who, in another degree, mock the most sacred rite of Christianity, by drinking wine from a human skull?

Would the belief that the *republican, virtuous, patriotic* and *religious* Washington, could cultivate or cherish such a society, be less sacriligious to his memory, than it would be shocking to the world, to inflict at this time on his sacred remains, some of the penalties of masonry, on those who renounce the order—to tear his revered body from Mount Vernon, "to become a prey to wild beasts of the field, and vultures of the air, or bury it in the rough sands of the sea, a cable-tow's length from the shore, at low water mark, where the tide ebbs and flows twice in twenty-four hours"—or lock it up for seven days in an American fortress, under the American flag, and then plunge it at midnight into the torrent of the Niagara?

When Washington was a boy and a young man, he acted as youths usually do; fond of novelty and induced by curiosity.—But to suppose that in his maturer years, his feelings

or his judgement were tickled and caught by the baby clothes of Masonry, its childish mummeries, and harlequin exhibitions, would be any thing else than a manifestation of respect and reverence for his character and memory.

He became a mason when young, and was ignorant of the nature and tendency of the order till after he had taken the oath to secrecy and fidelity forever. At a later period of life, when engaged in the arduous struggle for American liberty, experience, reflection and observation, manifested to him the full character of Masonry. But if he had then rashly and publicly renounced and denounced a society with whom defamation is a system, and vengeance is a sworn duty, his reputation, and perhaps his life, would have been the forfeit. That single event might have caused the thirteen American provinces to remain bound for years at the footstool of the monarch of Britain.

Having thus shown from Masonic records; from his own writings; from the recollections of his contemporaries; from the knowledge of his biographers; and from his whole life and character, the nature of his feelings towards Freemasonry, and also the probable reason why he did not, at an early day, *denounce* the society, as well as withdraw from it, the question may fairly be asked: Did he take no means to guard his country from the evils of such combinations? He did. He who never shrunk from danger when its encounter could serve his fellow citizens, took the most effectual means, and embraced the most solemn occasion, to place his testimony against them on lasting record. In his Farewell Address, of September, 1796, we find these warnings, which cannot be mistaken.

"All obstructions to the execution of the laws, all combinations and associations, under whatever plausible character, with the real design to direct, control, counteract, or awe, the regular deliberations and actions of the constituted authori-

ties, are destructive of this fundamental principle, and of fatal tendency. They serve to organize faction; to give it an artificial and extraordinary force; to put in the place of the delegated will of the nation, the will of the party, often a small but artful and enterprising minority of the community; and, according to the alternate triumphs of different parties, to make the public administration the mirror of the ill-concerted and incongruous projects of faction rather than the organ of consistent and wholesome plans, digested by common councils, and modified by mutual interests."

"However combinations or associations of the above description may now and then answer popular ends, they are likely in the course of time and things to become potent engines, by which cunning, ambitious, and unprincipled men, will be enabled to subvert the power of the people, and to usurp for themselves the reins of government; destroying afterwards the very engines which have lifted them to unjust dominion."

It will be perceived that Washington here makes no express mention of Freemasonry. It would have been undignified in him to have alluded by name to any particular society; especially to one whose bloated existence was even then marked with its own destruction, although it could count back to a bar-room birth in an obscure tavern of London, in the year 1717, and whose only chance of immortality would be such a mention by him, as loathsome insects are sometimes found preserved in the purest amber. No. His last testament to his country, which will endure as long as liberty shall be cherished among men, was not to be marked with the ephemeral name of a society which forms only one of the temporary excrescences of the time. Neither his address to America was to be thus disgraced, nor masonry thus honored. In that address his object was to deal with general and immutable truths, and the fundamental principles of our government.

His remarks on the subject of combinations and associations, are therefore applicable to every description of them, past, present and to come, whether they be sworn or unsworn, foreign or domestic, secret or open.

Upon a deliberate consideration of all the facts and circumstances which have been detailed and referred to, I believe that no impartial and unprejudiced mind will doubt but that FREEMASONRY, with all other combinations calculated to "control, counteract or awe, the regular deliberations of the constituted authorities," was denounced, and was intended to be denounced by Washington in his Farewell Address to the people of the United States.

Masonry, with the hope of sheltering itself from exposure, and averting the certain destruction that awaits it from the righteous sentence of the American people, points unceasingly to the name of the illustrious men who may once have belonged to the order, and for ten years has been ringing the change on the names of Washington, Franklin and Lafayette. The views of Washington can be judged by his actions and language just exhibited. Franklin and Lafayette have left behind them scarcely less clear and unequivocal evidence of their disapprobation of masonry.

When a number of masons and others, soon after the revolutionary war, endeavored to establish an order of nobility in this country, under the name of the Cincinnati, with the specious guise of preserving the memory of the deeds of heroism to which that glorious time gave birth, the project was crushed almost in its origin, and the whole scheme rendered supremely ridiculous, in the eyes of American people, by the wit, the ridicule, and the argument of Franklin and Jefferson —those apostles of liberty and democracy. And when Franklin was consulted by a relation on the propriety of his becoming a mason, the sage replied with his characteristic humor and candor, "one fool in a family is enough." To which

may be added the remarkable fact, that in all his writings, particularly in his memoirs of his own life, not a single mention is made of his connexion with the craft. Every one who has read his life, must remember with what exactness every occurrence of his varied history is related. Why then is it that no notice is taken of his masonic membership? The reply is prompt. He did not wish posterity to be informed of the fact. Had he deemed it an honor, or the society even harmless in its effects, the case would have been different.*

When the justly popular Lafayette was in this country in 1824 and '5, masonry, gratified at the circumstance of his having become a mason in his youth, dragged him, in every town he visited, to halls and garrets wherever a Lodge could be assembled. Yet the contempt in which he held masonry, and the disgust he felt at the desire of its devotees, to shew off their robes and jewelry at the expense of his comfort and convenience, were not concealed. They are depicted in the following passage from that very candid, elaborate and able work, "Letters on Masonry and Antimasonry, addressed to John Q. Adams, by William L. Stone of New York," himself an adhering mason.

"This reminds me of a remark made by General Lafayette at the time the masons were pulling the good old General about in this city, striving among each other for the honor of giving him some of the higher degrees. 'To-morrow,' he said '*I am to visit the schools; I am to dine with the Mayor; and in the evening, I suppose, I am to be made* VERY WISE

* In Watson's annals of Philadelphia, page 614 of the octavo edition of 1830, is found the description of an outrage attended with loss of life, committed under the name of masonry, in which it was attempted to implicate Franklin. He, of course, successfully repelled the charge, but it would be useful to investigate the matter fully, to ascertain whether his dislike of the order may not then have commenced or have been confirmed.

by the Freemasons.' I never shall forget the arch look with which he uttered the irony."

If masons be thus free in the use of the names of Franklin and Lafayette, although these distinguished men in reality held masonry in derision, it is not surprising that they should use the name of Washington in the same manner, and with equal injustice, to uphold the tottering fabric of the society.

The proneness of masons to appropriate to their association the character and names of great men, is strikingly exemplified in the fact that some of them have not hesitated, publicly to charge the illustrious founders of democracy, Jefferson and Madison, with having been masons. Moses Richardson, the Grand Treasurer of the Grand Encampment of Massachusetts and Rhode Island, at the investigation of masonry held in Rhode Island in December 1831 and January 1832, testified, *that all the Presidents of the United States except two* (the two Adams's) *were masons.* And the Reverend Bernard Whitney, the orator at the dedication of what is called a masonic temple at Boston, in June 1832, made the same assertion on his individual authority.

The whole of Jefferson's life, devoted to the cause of liberty and the equal rights of man, and his zealous and powerful exposure in all his writings of all aristocratic combinations and associations, are quite sufficient to free his name and character from the imputation of being a mason. He thus writes on privileged societies, in a letter dated April 16, 1784, to General Washington, who had requested his opinion on the subject:

"The objections of those who are opposed to the institution (Cincinnati) shall be briefly sketched. You will readily fill them up. They urge that they are against the confederation—against the letter of some of our constitutions—against the spirit of all of them:—that the foundation on which all of these are built, is the natural equality of man, the denial of

every pre-eminence but that annexed to legal office, and particularly the denial of a pre-eminence by birth. That however, in their present dispositions, citizens might decline accepting honorary instalments into the order, a time may come when a change of dispositions would render these flattering, when a well directed distribution of them might draw into the order all the men of talents, of office and of wealth, and in this case, would probably procure an engraftment into the government; that in this they will probably be supported by their foreign members, and the wishes and influence of foreign courts; that experience has shewn that the hereditary branches of modern governments, are the patrons of privilege and prerogative, and not of the natural rights of the people, whose oppressors they generally are: that besides these evils, which are remote, others may take place more immediately; that a distinction is kept up between the civil and military, which it is for the happiness of both to obliterate; *that when the members assemble they will be proposing to do something, and what that something may be, will depend on actual circumstances; that being an organized body, under habits of subordination, the first obstruction to enterprise will be already surmounted;* that the moderation and virtue of a single character, have probably prevented this revolution from being closed as most others have been, by a subversion of that liberty it was intended to establish; that he is not immortal, and his successor, or some of his successors, may be led by false calculations into a less certain road of glory."

As to Madison, he fortunately lived long enough to learn the enormities of masonry, and its aptitude at enrolling among its worshippers, the names of eminent men who were all their lives entire strangers to its *principles*, its *rites*, and its *fruits*.

He thus replied to a friend who informed him of some of the doings of the fraternity, and who inquired whether he was or ever had been a mason:

"MONTPELIER, January 24, 1832.

"*Dear Sir*,—I received long ago your interesting favor of the 31st October, with the pamphlet referred to, and I owe an apology for not sooner acknowledging it. I hope it will be a satisfactory one, that the state of my health, crippled by a severe rheumatism, restricted my attention to what seemed to have immediate claims upon it; and in that light I did not view the subject of your communication; ignorant as *I was* of the true character of masonry, and little informed as I was of the grounds on which its extermination was contended for; and incapable as I was and am in my situation of investigating the controversy.

"*I never was a mason*, and no one perhaps could be more a stranger to the principles, rites, and fruits of the Institution. I *had* never regarded it as dangerous or noxious; nor, on the other hand, as deriving importance from any thing *publicly known* of it. From the number and character of those who *now* support the charges against masonry, *I cannot doubt that it is at least susceptible of abuses*, outweighing any advantages promised by its patrons. With this apologetic explanation, I tender you, sir, my respectful and cordial salutations.

"JAMES MADISON."

If masons could thus, in defiance of truth and justice, force to the aid of sinking masonry, the popular democratic names of Jefferson and Madison, who never belonged to the order, need we wonder that they should use the reputation of Washington with equal injustice, for the same purpose, merely because he had in his youth been a mason?

When a man of distinguished merit dies, if at any time he had been a mason, although he may have abandoned the Lodge the greater part of his life, masons immediately seize his name to add to the list of great men that belonged to the society, and ever after use it to allure new dupes to the fraternity.

The late Chief Justice Marshall, William Wirt, and Cadwallader D. Colden, (the friend and biographer of Fulton,) had all been masons in their youth. If they had died before

the masonic murder of Morgan aroused the attention of the people to the tendency and the acts of masonry, they would have been enrolled by masons among the great men of the order, and the public ear would have been deafened with the chime of Marshall, Wirt and Colden, as it was with the changes rung on the names of Washington, Franklin and Lafayette.

But fortunately for truth and liberty, they survived that crisis in the progress of our free institutions. Yet attempts to appropriate some of them *masonically* have not been wanting. In August 1833, an eastern paper stated that Judge Marshall said "that Freemasonry was a jewel of the utmost value; that the pure in heart and life could only appreciate it fully—and that in a free government it must, it will be sustained and protected." This publication was made in Massachusetts, upwards of five hundred miles from Richmond, where the Judge resided, and he was at that time about 78 years of age. If he had never heard the assertion, or if hearing of it he had deemed it too absurd to merit notice, then at his death (which in the course of nature could not be remote,) the publication would have been assumed as true, by every Lodge, Chapter and Encampment throughout the United States. They would have alleged triumphantly that the story was published in the life time of the Chief Justice, and that he never denied its correctness.

But happily, as is seen from his letter of October 18, 1833, before referred to, the publication was seen by him, and most explicitly denied, and the important facts added, that he had not been in a Lodge but *once for forty years*, and that he never "affirmed that there was any positive good or ill in the institution itself."

In September 1831, the illustrious and pious Wirt published to the world that he had not been in a Lodge for more than thirty years, and that he considered masonry "at war with

the fundamental principles of the social compact, *treason against society,* and a wicked conspiracy against the laws of God and men, *which ought to be put down.*"

In May 1829, Colden addressed to a meeting in New York, a long, most valuable, and interesting letter on the subject of masonry; in which he says, "It is true that I have been a mason a great number of years, and that I held very high masonic offices and honors. It is equally true that I have for a long time ceased to have any connexion with the institution, because, I have believed, and do now believe, it is productive of much more *evil* than *good.* It is also true that I have on no fit occasion hesitated to express this sentiment. I have long entertained my present opinion, that a man who would eschew all evil should not be a Freemason.—*Indeed I have never known a great mason who was not a great fool.*"

Since the publication of these letters, the sentiments of masonry towards Marshall, Wirt and Colden appear to have been not a little changed. No aproned or mitred processions accompanied their bodies to the grave: No mallets, crowns, compasses and acacia, were displayed at their funerals: No masonic orations commemorated the fact that they had ever belonged to the order. Their mortal remains were consigned to the earth with the dignified simplicity of plain republicans.

No one can doubt that if Washington had lived within the last few years, his public relation to masonry would not have been different from that of Marshall, Colden and Wirt.

And even before 1799, the period of his decease, if masonry had ventured to hold him up before the American people as a supporter of their order, they would have been spurned with indignation. For even so far back as 1780, he called masonry "child's play," as has been already shown; he subsequently announced to the committee of right worshipfuls of King David's Lodge, that *it was not agreeable to him to be addressed as a mason:* And in 1798, he was prompt and

most decisive in correcting the erroneous supposition of the Reverend Mr. Snyder, that he presided over the Lodges of this country: and added, that he presided over no Lodge, and had not been in one more than once or twice for thirty years. It was not till after death had silenced the lips of Washington, that masons dared to trumpet him to the world as a devotee of masonry, and to exhibit the masonic attire and mallets, and cable-tows, which they pretended he had had in frequent use, and held in awful veneration.

I have thus complied with the request of the House, more at length than was at first intended, but not more fully than the exceeding great importance of the subject seemed to demand. I cannot, however, dismiss it, without calling on the Legislature to adopt the proper measures for removing the abomination of Freemasonry from the land.

Putting aside all other objections, the desecration and invalidation of oaths which it inevitably produces, should cause a moral and religious people to banish it forever. In the words of Washington, to be found in another part of the Farewell Address, "*Let it simply be asked, where is the security for property, for reputation, for life, if the sense of religious obligation desert the oaths which are the instruments of investigation in the courts of justice.*"

To this may be added the opinion of our own Snyder, contained in his annual message of December 5, 1816. "The frequency of oaths, and the levity with which they are commonly administered, on occasions trifling and unnecessary, beget indifference and irreverence for the most awful appeal which the creature can make to his Creator. This has not only a most pernicious influence upon the morals and the order of society generally, but it causes the commission of numerous injuries by perjury. *This abomination in our land*, it is feared, will increase while oaths are uselessly multiplied, and so long as the distinction between merely moral and con-

structively legal perjuries, shield the perjured against prosecution and deserved punishment."

If such were the opinions of Washington and Snyder on the irreverent and unnecessary administration of oaths, at the time when the masonic penalties attached to them were either unknown to the people, or believed not to be intended for actual execution, what would they not now say, when the judicial proceedings of the country bear ample record, both of the correct revelation of the oaths, and of their literal construction in practice, and of the actual infliction of the penalty for violation? Disregard of the obligation to "always hail, ever conceal and never reveal," any of the mysteries of Freemasonry, produced the murderous infliction of the proper masonic penalty, viz: the destruction of life, (most probably in literal accordance with the oath,) and the committal of the body to a watery grave. This inhuman outrage in its turn brought into action the oath of a higher degree, which binds masons to assist each other "whether they be right or wrong," under dread, no doubt, of the more fearful penalty annexed. And this again accomplished that concealment of "murder" by witnesses and that perpetration of "treason" to law and justice by peace officers, jurors and judges, which seem to be the very perfection of masonry in the arch Royal Degree, the conception of whose enormous penalty is disgraceful and horrible to humanity. Nothing but the absolute fear of the infliction of such penalties, could for a moment reduce an honest mind even to silent acquiescence in the binding force of such unlawful and immoral oaths. These things are not mere surmise.

Whatever may be the proceedings of the Legislature now or hereafter, on the subject of extra-judicial oaths and secret societies, I hope, with the blessings of Providence on my exertions, to be able when resigning my charge, to join in the honest boast of the democratic Findlay, in his last Executive Message of December 7, 1820, to the Legislature.

"My public life," said he, "has no doubt been clouded by many errors of the judgement, but in reviewing the numerous intrinsic difficulties which pertain to the exercise of an extensive patronage, and especially when an inordinate avidity for power and emolument was so prevalent, I shall always regard it as a source of high satisfaction, that every attempt on the part of ambitious individuals, or SECRET ASSOCIATIONS, to exercise an unconstitutional control over the executive authority of the Commonwealth, has been successfully resisted during the period those functions have been entrusted to my care."

I am, Gentlemen,
Very respectfully,
Your fellow-citizen,
JOS. RITNER.

To Messrs. FORD,
ENGLISH,
GARRETSON,
STARK,
DIMMICK,
} Committee.

After the reading of the report, a motion was made by Mr. WATTS, that 5000 copies in the English language, and 3000 copies in the German language, of the said report, be printed for distribution.

The motion being under consideration, a motion was made by Mr. GARRETSON, to amend the same, by striking therefrom "5000," and inserting in lieu thereof "3000," and by striking therefrom "3000," and inserting in lieu thereof "2000."

When a motion was made by Mr. DARSIE, to amend the amendment, by striking therefrom "3000 copies in the

English language, and 2000 copies in the German language," and inserting in lieu thereof " the usual number of copies."

And on the question, will the House agree so to amend the amendment? The yeas and nays were required by Mr. WATTS and Mr. M'ILVAINE of Philadelphia, and are as follows:

YEAS—Messrs. Alricks, Beatty of Crawford, Boyer, Brawley, Cooley, Coplan, Crawford, Curtis, Darsie, Dimock of Susquehanna, English, Erdman, Espy, Gilmore, Harman, Hasson, Hill, Hinkson, Hopkins, Hughes, James, Johnson, Leech, Lewellen, Longaker, M'Clelland, M'Curdy, Rambo, Reed of Bedford, Reed of Philadelphia, Reynolds of Luzerne, Reynolds of Westmoreland, Rheiner, Shearer, Sheetz, Shortz, Stark, Sturgeon, Taylor of Lycoming, Thompson, Woodburn, Yearick, Yost, Dewart, Speaker—45.

NAYS—Messrs. Beale, Beaty of Mercer, Brooks, Carnahan, Chamberlain, Collins, Cunningham, Diller, Duncan, Etter, Fegely, Ferguson, Flanagan, Fling, Ford, Frederick, Fries, Garretson, Gorgas, Hammer, Harshe, Jackson of Berks, A Kauffman, A. I. Kauffman, Lehman, M'Ilvain of Chester, M'Ilvaine of the city, Miller, Morton, Mowry, Oliver, Park, Parker, Picking, Richardson, Sebring, Smith, Snyder of Philadelphia, Spackman, Stevenson, Taylor of Indiana, Trego, Tyson, Watts, Weidman—44.

So the question was decided in the affirmative.

And the amendment as amended was agreed to.

And on the question, will the House agree to the motion as amended? The yeas and nays were required by Mr. REED of Philadelphia, and Mr. RHEINER, and are as follows—yeas 62, nays 18.

So the question was decided in the affirmative.

LETTER TO DANIEL WEBSTER.

PITTSBURG, Nov. 11, 1835.

Hon. Daniel Webster, Boston, Mass.

SIR,

The Democratic Antimasons of Allegheny county, by their delegates in Convention assembled, have this day appointed the undersigned to represent them in a Democratic Antimasonic State Convention, to be holden at Harrisburg on the 14th day of December next, with instructions to urge your nomination by that body, as a candidate for the office of President of the United States.

Your Antimasonic fellow-citizens here have been influenced in their decision, not only by the esteem in which they hold your character as a statesman, and devoted friend to the Constitution, but also by the impression which has been made on their minds of your entire accordance in opinion with them on the subject of secret associations.

For the satisfaction of our political friends in other sections of this Commonwealth, we shall be most happy if you will enable us to submit to them your opinions respecting the order of *Freemasonry;* an institution, whose principles and obligations the People of Pennsylvania firmly believe to be dangerous to civil liberty, and in contravention to the established rights of American citizens.

We are, very respectfully, &c.

HARMAR DENNY,
BENJAMIN DARLINGTON,
JAMES C. GILLELAND,
NEVILLE B. CRAIG,
W. W. IRWIN,

Delegates from the County of Allegheny to the Democratic Antimasonic State Convention of Pennsylvania.

REPLY OF MR. WEBSTER.

Boston, Nov. 20, 1835.

Gentlemen,

I have the honor to acknowledge your favor of the 11th inst. the receipt of which has been delayed a few days by my absence from home.

Permit me, gentlemen, to express my grateful sense of the respect shown me by my fellow-citizens, the members of the Convention of Democratic Antimasons of Allegheny county, in their recent proceedings, as set forth in your communication. The esteem they are pleased to express for my public character, and their confidence in my attachment to the Constitution of the country, demand my profound acknowledgements.

Nor do they do me more than justice, in their belief of my entire accordance in their opinion on the subject of Secret Societies. You express a wish however that for the gratification of friends in other parts of the State, I should enable you to make known my sentiments respecting the order of Freemasonry. I have no hesitation, gentlemen, in saying, that however unobjectionable may have been the original objects of the institution, or however pure may be the motives and purposes of individual members, and notwithstanding the many great and good men who have from time to time belonged to the Order; yet, nevertheless, it is an institution which in my judgement, is essentially wrong in the principle of its formation; that from its very nature it is liable to great abuses; that among the obligations which are found to be imposed on its members, there are such as are entirely incompatible with the duty of good citizens; and that all *Secret Associations*, the members of which take upon themselves extraordinary obligations to one another, and are bound together by secret oaths, are naturally sources of jealousy and just

alarm to others ; are especially unfavorable to harmony and mutual confidence among men living together under popular institutions, and are dangerous to the general cause of civil liberty and good government. Under the influence of this conviction, it is my opinion that the future administration of all such oaths, and the imposition of all such obligations, *should be prohibited by law.*

I express these opinions, gentlemen, with the less reserve on this occasion, inasmuch as they have been often expressed already, not only to some of your own number, and many of your friends, but to all others, also, with whom I have at diftimes conversed on the subject.

Of the political principles and conduct of the Antimasons of Pennsylvania I have spoken freely in my place in the Senate, and under circumstances which took from the occasion all just suspicion of any indirect purpose. The opinions then expressed are unaltered. I have ever found the Antimasons of Pennsylvania true to the Constitution, the Union, and to the great interests of the country. They have adopted the "Supremacy of the Laws," as their leading sentiments ; and I know of none more just or more necessary. If there be among us any so high, as to be too high for the authority of law, or so low as to be too low for its regard and protection, or if there be any, who, by any means whatever, may exempt themselves from its control, then to that extent we have failed to maintain an equal government. The supremacy of the Constitution and the laws is the very foundation stone of Republican institutions; if it be shaken or removed from its place, the whole system must inevitably totter to its fall.

Your obliged friend and fellow-citizen,

DANIEL WEBSTER.

To Messrs. HARMAR DENNY,
BENJ. DARLINGTON,
J. C. GILLELAND,
NEVILLE B. CRAIG,
W. W. IRWIN,
} Delegates from the county of Allegheny to the Democratic Antimasonic Convention of Pennsylvania.

It has been deemed proper to make a few additional observations to the foregoing, from the fact of the recent MASONIC Celebration at Portsmouth, N. H. (June 24, 1841)—a Celebration, at which the Rev. (shall we so call him?) E. M. P. Wells officiated as Orator!—A minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ!—What sort of a minister must this man be?—Does he not know, or does he contemptuously disregard, the command of the Being he professes to call Master, who says "Swear not at all,"—and is not the murderous institution made up of oaths, and under the penalty of death for a violation of them?—and did not the death of the patriotic WILLIAM MORGAN, and no doubt of others, result from these wicked, antichristian oaths?—and this professed minister of the Gospel, it seems, becomes a principal actor in the scene of iniquity!—But let us hear what Col. STONE of the New York Commercial says of Freemasonry:—and here it is proper to observe that Col. Stone was a high mason, and perfectly acquainted with the institution, and whose life was threatened by some masonic scoundrel, as may be seen in his 25th letter to the Hon. John Q. Adams in page 264 of the volume, to which the reader is referred.

From the 48th and 49th Letters we give the following extracts—but it is necessary to say that our extracts must be short.

"Elder BERNARD,* says Col. Stone, "informs us, that *five* "*weeks* before the outrage [abduction and murder of Morgan] "a Baptist clergyman, a Royal Arch Mason of high standing, "declared to him, THAT MORGAN MUST BE PUT OUT OF THE "WAY!" and again—"at Lockport, *three months* after the "outrage, Bruce was elected Scribe of the Chapter upon the "express ground that he was entitled to the office from his "exertions in the case of Morgan!—Col. King was elected

* A very high mason, but who renounced the institution.—See his book entitled "Light on Masonry."

" and installed High Priest of the Chapter at Lewiston, at the " moment when he held Morgan a prisoner, in a solitary cell " seven miles distant [Fort Niagara] *and had murder in his* " *heart!*"—and in addition to this shocking account we find that the prison, the " solitary cell" of a free citizen of the United States, is *Fort Niagara!* having the violated flag of the United States flying over the Fort!—and to whom is he a prisoner?—to a band of masonic ruffians, for they were entitled to no better name—and what was his crime? why, communicating the secrets of freemasonry!—Col. Stone goes on to say " Five months *after* the perpetration of the crime, " the Grand Chapter *rejected a proposition* offering a reward " of one thousand dollars for the discovery and apprehension " of the authors of it; while on the other hand, they appro- " priated a like sum of one thousand dollars under the pre- " text of *unspecified charity, but in fact to be used for the* " *aid, comfort and assistance of the* CRIMINALS!

" HOWARD, one of the MURDERERS by his own confession, " was cherished by certain of the masons of this city: [New " York] He was kept in concealment from the officers of jus- " tice! funds were raised for him! and he was finally smug- " gled across Long Island, and put on board one of the foreign " packets off Gravesend or Coney Island."—In this manner does Col. Stone go on, showing conclusively that *whole Chapters* and *Lodges* were implicated in the outrage,—and is it not strange, passing strange, that we see efforts now made to revive the murderous institution? We consider the recent Masonic Celebration at Portsmouth as an effort, which we trust will be put down by the united voice of a religious and political people.—We regret being compelled to withhold any of the judicious and able remarks of Col. Stone, but must refer the reader to the volume of Letters addressed as suggested to the Hon. John Q. Adams—indeed, after giving indubitable evidence of the criminality of LODGES and CHAP-

TERS, he says " *There has never been uttered from the walls* " *of either* LODGE *or* CHAPTER, *from the highest to the low-* " *est, an expression of real censure or honest indignation,* " *against any individual, however clearly it may have been* " *known that he was engaged in* DEPRIVING A FREE CITIZEN " OF HIS LIBERTY, AND PUTTING HIM TO DEATH " IN COLD BLOOD."

We now, after the foregoing shocking detail, appeal to every citizen of our beloved country—how and in what manner can the recent *Masonic* celebration at Portsmouth be viewed, taken politically, morally or religiously? Can it be viewed in any other light, where not beclouded or obscured by ignorance, than as what is called *particips criminis* or a participation in all the outrages and murder committed on the person of William Morgan—the aid, assistance and protection of his murderers?—It is a plain question and addressed to every man of feeling or humanity.

Col. Stone, in the spirit of patriotism by which he was animated, proceeds to show that FREEMASONRY ought to be ABOLISHED, and among other reasons he states that " The " garments of masonry are stained with blood!—an American " citizen has been sacrificed upon its altar, for no breach of " the civil laws of the Land, but only for a violation of his " masonic obligations! what has once happened may happen " again: and the only safe and secure disposition of the sub- " ject is to abandon it and blot it out forever!"—Again, " The " power of masonry has proved too strong for the arm of the " civil law! The cry which earth sends up to Heaven, when " her bosom is stained with the blood of a murdered son, sel- " dom fails to ensure just retribution from the hands of her " children; *but in this instance* IT HAS FAILED! Ought then" he continues " an institution which has exercised such power " to exist in a free country?

" The crime that has been committed in the name of the " institution was not perpetrated, as it has been contended,

" by ignorant fanatics, but the conspiracy embraced much of " the intelligence and respectability of that enlightened por- " tion of the country and THE MURDERERS THEMSELVES MEN " OF NO MEAN CONSIDERATION!"—Again, " The institution " cannot vindicate itself from the stigma of this outrage.—On " the contrary, by the course they have taken, *since it was* " *perpetrated*, both the GRAND LODGE and GRAND CHAPTER " have in fact assumed the responsibility of the transaction! " For aught that these governing bodies have done, the con- " victs in that outrage are as good masons, standing *Recti in* " *curia*, as any of us!"—then follows the question which may be pertinently addressed to those individuals, who as masonic members attended the Portsmouth Celebration, but more especially to E. M. P. WELLS, " Ought men of principle and " virtue to sustain such an institution, or remain connected " with it?"—Once more, " The conduct of masons on the tri- " als at the west, is a sufficient cause for the abandonment. " *Grand Jurors* were false to their oaths—to truly present! " *Witnesses* upon trial were false to their oaths—to truly " testify! *Petit Jurors* were false to their oaths—to truly " try! Witnesses in some instances spurned the authority of " the Court, and refused to testify; and in other instances to " be sworn! Sheriffs corruptly returned *partial Grand Ju-* " *rors!*"—What a complication of wickedness,—yet such is only a partial account given by Col. Stone, who was not barely a mason, but one of high standing and consequently was perfectly acquainted with the masonic institution—and from his being the editor of a widely spread paper, which had extensive exchanges, giving him the means of knowing every thing regarding the abduction and murder of William Morgan! but we repeat, whoever is desirous of knowing the nature, the nonsense, and the moral obliquity of the institution, let him read Col. Stone's Letters, 49 in number, to the Hon. John Q. Adams.

The following remarks on the celebration at Portsmouth are from the Lynn Record of June 30.

"The Freemasons celebrated the festival of St. John, as they call it, on Thursday last, the 24th inst. at Portsmouth, N. H. We could hardly have believed, that a sufficient number of rational beings, would have been found in this enlightened age, to go on pilgrimage to perform this worse than senseless idolatry—this worship of the vile Juggernaut, the old exploded and disgraced mummery of Freemasonry. We read the notice of such a meeting without marvel, it is true, because there will be a few, here and there one, incapable of gaining notice otherwise, who arrive to high honors in the Masonic ranks, and cannot forego the pleasures, the honors, which these occasions bring, and which they can no where else enjoy—the honor of being Great, Grand, Royal, Most Excellent, Most Worshipful, &c. But we did not suppose that any considerable number of decent men would at this day risk their reputation for common sense by being seen with the little aprons on, marching through the dust in procession.

"The Portsmouth Journal in giving an account of this celebration, says :—'It was well attended by the Fraternity from our own and from the neighboring States. Between two and three hundred brethren were in attendance. The procession moved at about 11 o'clock, to the music of the Newburyport Brass Band, from Masonic Hall through the principal streets to the North Church, where, after appropriate introductory services, [pray what were they ?—being blinded, haltered and stripped ?] an able and truly eloquent address was delivered by Rev. E. M. P. Wells of Boston, which was principally confined to the *morale* of Masonry. He exhibited the Institution as one of the soundest moral tendency and as inculcating the soundest and most liberal principles of government.'

"So the Rev. E. M. P. Wells of Boston, after having gone through the initiatory mummery of Freemasonry—the inde-

cent ceremonies, and having taken the horrid and blasphemous oaths, and having known as one of the legitimate effects of these horrid oaths, the death of WILLIAM MORGAN, is not ashamed to tramp off to Portsmouth, and stripping off his priestly robe, invest himself in the ridiculous costume of the craft, march 'through the principal streets to the North *Church*'—yes, to the *Church ;*—a fine occasion for entering the sanctuary, truly! where no antislavery lecturer could gain admittance.

"The Journal tells us that this very 'able and truly eloquent address' of the Rev. Brother E. M. P. Wells, 'was principally confined to the *morale* of Masonry.' The *moral* of being hoodwinked, divested of clothing, and dragged about the lodge room, a laughing stock, to be jeered and insulted by the gaping, vulgar throng; the *moral* of swearing to 'extricate a brother from difficulty, whether he be right or wrong, in all cases whatever, murder and treason not excepted!'—The *moral* of swearing that 'you will not violate the chastity of a Master Mason's wife, sister or daughter, *knowing her to be such!*'

"O, Rev. Brother E. M. P. Wells, think of these things,—'Evil *communications* corrupt good *morals*,'—'Ye cannot serve God and Mammon.' And when you shall have thrown off the gaudy trappings of Freemasonry, and assumed the sacerdotal robe, and have entered the church and the sacred desk, to expound, not the *morale* of Freemasonry, but the Word of God, reflect, we beseech thee, that 'for all these things God will call thee into judgement.' He will call thee to 'render an account of thy stewardship.'"

To show the difference between what we consider a true minister of the Gospel, and one who is not, we insert the Renunciation of Freemasonry made by the Rev. *Joseph S. Christmas*, who, it seems, was in a double sense literally *taken in*, in the British Provinces. It was originally publish-

ed in the New York Investigator, the editor of which remarks that it "is not the less valuable for having been one of the latest acts of life; it is in truth his *dying testimony* against false and wicked Freemasonry, and is entitled to the highest regard, as coming from a man, sincere and candid, learned and pious."

RENUNCIATION.

Oh my soul! come not thou into their secret, unto their assembly mine honor be not thou united.—*Gen.* xlix. 6.

To the Editor of the Investigator.

Sir,

I was much surprised a few days since, upon being informed by a friend that my name had been mentioned in your paper, and held up to the public as one of those clergymen who still continue in the fellowship of Freemasonry. Although mortified by such an use of my name I do not regret that I have been thus reminded of my duty. I am a mason, and it is due to myself to explain the extent of my connexion with the fraternity, and the occasion of my remissness in not having earlier disavowed that connexion.

About five years since, in a season of comparative youth, when I had but just passed my minority, I made application for admission to a lodge. For this *mis-step*, for such I now deem it, I might offer some apologies, such as that the moral and Christian character of masonry had not been then to my knowledge called in question, that many of my most esteemed friends, and worthy members of the congregation of which I then had charge, and most of the Protestant ministers where I then resided were masons, but now I feel that I did wrong in assuming the unqualified obligations of an institution of whose interior I knew nothing. I was initiated into the order, took the Apprentice's Degree, and never afterwards entered a lodge, or gave or received a masonic signal.

Through the subsequent trials and duties of several years, masonry scarcely entered my mind, nor was it till of late that I have been convinced of the *intrinsic* evil of the institution; nor did I then feel it my duty to renounce, first, because I concluded from my slight connexion with the lodge, that I had but little to renounce, and secondly, because that

connexion being with a lodge in a province of the British Empire, I supposed it not known in this country, and therefore not injurious by way of example. But I was mistaken; and as I have been emblazoned before the public as a Freemason, [a trick always pursued by the craft, when a man of distinction is cajoled into it,] neither modesty nor duty require any apology for the publicity with which I wipe the stain of masonry from my conscience as a man, and from my office as a minister of the Lord Jesus Christ.

Should any member of the fraternity say that the opinion of one who has made so little progress in the craft is nothing worth; I reply that the pretensions to secrecy still maintained on the part of the institution are false, and can be proved so by the concentrated daylight of the manifold testimony which no reasonable man can deny. My opinion may be nothing worth, but this at least will be gained;—no man shall henceforth put me in the catalogue of clergymen abetting masonry.

It is not for me to explain how it is, that many upright, and honorable, and conscientious, and pious men are still found within the inclosure of the mystic tie. I would hope that many of them are ignorant of the mysteries of iniquity which exist in the higher degrees, and that others still preserve silence from wrong views of Christian casuistry, and have yet to learn that sinful oaths like that of King Herod bind to nothing but repentance, and fruits meet for repentance. Explain their conduct as you will, it is enough for me to know in ascertaining my duty, that masonry is *useless*, containing no motives to duty nor sanctions to morality paramount to Christianity; abounding in no results of benevolence which are not tenfold counterbalanced by the necessary expenses, and incidental temptations of the system; imparting no useful knowledge unless a few cabalistic words and traditionary fables be useful knowledge. It is enough for me to know that masonry is *false* in its pretensions to antiquity, may be proved so, not only by the entire absence of documentary testimony, but the internal evidence of imposture palpable to every linguist and biblical scholar. It is enough for me to know that masonry is *anti-christian* and *impious;* an assertion which may be verified by a reference to the nature and frequency of the oaths; to the rejection of a Mediator from its worship; to the blasphemous titles which in certain degrees

are given to its officers; to the ludicrous application often made of scriptural language; to the profane introduction of sacramental ceremonies, and to the principal duty of the lodge, which is, in every degree, the dramatic performance of what I can describe by no other name than a *farce*, founded on scriptural history, whose serio-comic effect indeed betrays that no master in the histrionic art was engaged in its composition. For these, and other reasons, I cannot but consider speculative masonry as one of the "unfruitful works of darkness," with which a high authority—higher than all the unlawful oaths of the craft, bids me "have no fellowship, but rather to reprove them." And when that time which I confidently expect shall arrive, when the word of GOD shall grow mightily and prevail, we shall see a repetition of what occurred eighteen centuries since in the city of Diana of the Ephesians. "And many that believed came and confessed, and showed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together and burned them before all men; and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver." Acts xix. 18, 19.

If these remarks should meet the eye of any follower of the Redeemer who still worships at the altar of masonry, I beg him once more to consider whether imposed on by the mock solemnities of the lodge and the pompous pretensions of the craft, he is not really attempting to effect a concord between Christ and Belial; and whether he does not owe it to the souls of masons, to the honor of the church of Christ, and to the good of mankind, to come out and be separate.

JOSEPH S. CHRISTMAS.

Pastor of the Bowery Presbyterian Church.

New York, March 2, 1830.

Such is the difference between the Rev. *Joseph S. Christmas*, and *E. M. P. Wells*, the Masonic Orator!

Although many, very many are the documents, that could be produced exhibiting the moral deformity of Freemasonry, enough to fill volumes, we shall conclude with the following Letter from the Hon. John Q. Adams to Mr. James Morehead, Editor of the Mercer Luminary.

WASHINGTON, Dec. 23, 1832.

Mr. James Morehead, Mercer, Pa.

SIR,

Mr. Banks, the worthy Representative of your district, delivered to me your friendly letter of the 26th of last month.—I have since the commencement of the session of Congress, regularly received the numbers of the Mercer Luminary, and have observed with pleasure the zeal and assiduity with which it disseminates the Light of Antimasonry.—To that cause I am devoted, because I believe it to be the cause of pure morals and of truth. Until the murder of Morgan I had very little knowledge of the institution of Freemasonry, except as an occasional witness of its childish pageantry, and the mock solemnity of its processions. These I believed to be harmless, and I gave willing credit to their boastful professions of benevolence and charity. Very soon after the Morgan catastrophe, however, the masonic *obligations* were disclosed to me in the escape of Col. William King, from the pursuit of justice, in the territory of Arkansas. I saw their operation, without being able to punish the offender or even judicially to authenticate the offence.—King escaped by the connivance of masonic obligations paramount to the laws of the land. He re-appeared afterwards upon the theatre of his guilt; and as you know, died suddenly, on the disclosing of facts which he had flattered himself were hidden from every person under the canopy of Heaven, without the pale of masonic oaths and penalties.—Other evidences of the practical effect of masonic obligations soon revealed themselves to me in the forms of *secret slander* and perjury. But of the multitude of atrocious crimes committed first in the conspiracy which terminated in the murder of Morgan, and for five years afterwards in baffling and defeating the Laws of the State in their efforts to bring the murderers to justice, I had a very imperfect idea till the publication of Col. Stone's Book.

There remained yet, not any reasonable doubt, but some deficiency of evidence, with regard to the essential, inherent, and indelible viciousness of the masonic obligations, in the solemn protestations of the adhering masons, that those obligations were falsely represented in the Books of Bernard and Avery Allyn. In the bold asseverations that no such oaths, obligations and penalties existed, and in reiterated declarations couched in delusive generalities, that *they* had never taken any oath or obligation inconsistent with their duties to their country or their religion; but always without disclosing what *were* the terms of those which they had taken. The investigation by a Committee of the Legislature of Rhode Island, finally brought out the obligations of ten degrees, as avowed to be practised in the Lodges, Chapters, and Encampments of that State. It exposed them in their hideous deformity; and took from the defenders of masonry their last refuge of prevarication.

It was to show them in their naked nature, divested of all sophisticated explanations, and all mental equivocations, that I wrote the four letters on the Entered Apprentice's Oath, which you have republished in the Luminary. I am happy that they have met your approbation.

I am with much respect,

Your friend and fellow-citizen,

J. Q. ADAMS.

We cannot conclude without gratifying the curiosity of a friend who wishes to be informed, why the 24th of June is celebrated by masons, as the anniversary of the birth or death, for we don't know which, of John the Baptist? The learned Orator can no doubt answer the question—and to which we append another.—Does the learned Orator seriously believe that John the Baptist ever heard or knew any thing of Freemasonry, an institution that had no existence for more than 1600 years after his death?—We ask his answer.